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Women entrepreneurs' personality characteristics and parents' parenting style profile in Turkey

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to clarify the profile of women entrepreneurs by investigating their personality characteristics and parents' parenting styles as motivating factors. In this study 104 women entrepreneurs and 108 women who work in the public sector filled out the questionnaires. Their personality characteristics were identified by "Big Five Inventory" while their perceptions about their mothers' and fathers' parenting styles were evaluated by "Perceived Parenting Styles Questionnaire". The results of this study revealed some differences in personality characteristics between the women entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs while stressing the importance of father parenting styles of women entrepreneurs.

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1. Introduction

All economies' prosperity is highly dependent on dynamic entrepreneurial activity. This is true across all stages of economic development and geographic regions. The high-growth, innovative and cross-border entrepreneurial ventures is a key contributor to new employment in an economy (GEM,2011). Furthermore; the most important determinant of a countries' competitiveness is its human talent, skills, education and productivity of its workforce. Over time, it has been understood that a nations' competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it utilizes its female talent. Yet, despite evidence regarding the importance of women's economic integration country-level data show us clearly that there are still discrepancies between men and women in economic participations, opportunities and entrepreneurial activities. Women's participation in entrepreneurship is lower than that of men in all over the world (WEF,2010). The women report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor suggests that this has long been the case. The report indicates that while the reasons for these gaps are not clear, it is likely that the true potential and contributions of women to all economies may not be fully realized (GEM, 2011)

Entrepreneurs are known for what they do: they create new products, processes, and services for the market. In general, entrepreneurs can be defined as individuals who bring about an improvement, both for other individuals and for society as a whole (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). Although some researchers think that entrepreneurs are born with some special genetic factors and they found a high degree of heritability associated with entrepreneurial behaviors

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(Nicolaou & Shane, 2009; Nicolaou, Shane, Cherkas, Hunkin, & Spector, 2008), some others (Rauch & Frese, 2007; Zhao & Seibert, 2006; Stewart & Roth, 2001) believe that entrepreneurship can be taught and they focused on personality aspects of entrepreneurship (locus of control, self-efficacy, state vs. action orientation, regulatory focus, risk taking, self-confidence and so on). Also, many researchers (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2001; Hisrich & Peters, 2002; Kuvan, 2007) notice that some variables like age, sex, and work experience as individual (micro) variables or family, friends and education as environmental (macro) factors have been found to effect entrepreneurial intentions.

As the recognition of the importance of entrepreneurial activity for economy and the gender gap in entrepreneurship in Turkey have increased, the profile of entrepreneurs became interesting issue to discuss. The researches about the role of women in the field of entrepreneurship, obstacles and challenges they faced and push factors of being entrepreneurs have been studied in literature. Researches point out that very often the enterprises started by women are influenced by the decisions and desires of their family members. The family is the first social group that one comes into contact with and from which the individual learns the basic values of living. Therefore, parents become the most important actors in an individuals' life. The individuals acquire their first experiences about education, mental and cognitive development and personalization in the family. That's why decision and preference of career and being an entrepreneur is relevant to the individuals' family. Given the paramount importance of entrepreneurship, the lack of studies empirically examining the link between entrepreneurship in the context of entrepreneurs' personality characteristics and parents' parenting style is an important research gap. The present study tries to fill this gap.

2. Entrepreneurship and Personality Characteristic

The researches on the relationship between entrepreneurship and personality have been subject to several criticisms. Personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that make a person unique. In the discussion of the personality traits, this study focuses on the Big Five dimensions, which are neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness. Neuroticism refers to the degree to which an individual has emotional stability. Individuals high on neuroticism tend to experience a number of negative emotions including anxiety, hostility, depression, impulsiveness, and vulnerability (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extraversion illustrates the extent to which people are assertive, dominant, energetic, active, positive and enthusiastic. People who score high on extraversion tend to be cheerful, they like to be with people and large groups, and seek excitement and stimulation (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Openness to experience means a tendency to be creative, curious, adventurous and receptive to new experience. Agreeableness assesses one's tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious towards others. Individuals high on agreeableness can be characterized as trusting, forgiving, caring, altruistic, and gullible. Conscientiousness indicates an individual's degree of organization, persistence, hard work and motivation in the pursuit of goal accomplishment (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Entrepreneurship process contains both individual and environmental factors. For this reason, to understand entrepreneurship, examining the personality characteristics and the environment in which individuals grow up would be appropriate.

3. Entrepreneurship and Parents' Parenting Styles

The human being starts to learn and adapt to life in the womb and this process continues lifelong. In this development individuals go through some stages like infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. While individuals are passing these stages, they interact with their families. In developmental psychology, family is defined as the basic unit that consists of parents and children (Goodnow, 1997). Therefore, attitudes and behaviors of the families have a great importance in the child's personalization, psychology, cognitive and mental development (Cüceloğlu, 2002). Parents' beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and expectations on childcare is called "parenting styles" (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

A family that is extraverted, proactive and has high achievement orientation encourages their children to become creative, open to experience and self-confident. İraz (2005) has mentioned that the education, manners and attitudes towards children can have three effects on entrepreneurial intentions and abilities. These are encouraging, limiting or neutral effects.

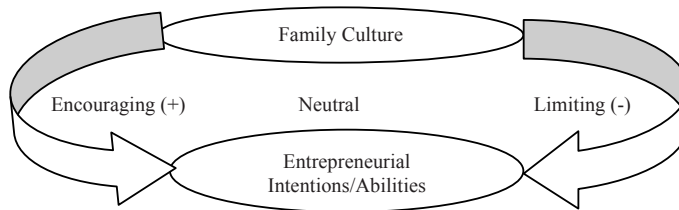


Figure.1 The Effect of Family on Entrepreneurship (İraz, 2005)

In the encouraging style parents stimulate their children to establish their own business, take risk and make innovations. On the other hand, in limiting effect, parents have limiting role on the child's thoughts, decisions and social networks. What's more, introverted parents discourage their child to have wide social groups and to be active. The behaviors and attitudes related to low risk awareness, low tolerance for ambiguity and limited social environment in the family have an important impact on children's beliefs, expectations and career plans. In neutral effect parents have neither positive nor negative effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

The parenting style is the key element in shaping the family culture and has an important impact on children perceptions. Baumrind (1991) has searched mother/father and child interactions and mother/father attitude about parenting in his studies and he noticed two sub-dimensions that are acceptance/involvement and control (Baumrind, 1991). Categorizing parents according to whether they are high or low on control and acceptance/involvement creates a typology of four parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive/neglecting and permissive/indulgent (Sümer & Güngör, 1999). Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and directive, but not responsive. They are obedience and statuses oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritative parents monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. They apply a high level of control and acceptance/involvement (Steinberg et. al. 1994). In authoritative parenting style parents are warm and lovely but at the same time they explain the family rules and expect their children to follow these rules if necessary. Permissive/neglecting parents are low both in control and acceptance/involvement. This can be considered as the opposite of authoritative style (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Permissive/indulgent parents are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation. They are high in acceptance but low in control (Baumrind, 1971). This approach is sometimes referred to as democratic parenting style. At the end of his studies Baumrind (1991) found that children of parents whose parenting style is democratic, are independent, creative and risk taker, express themselves well and are academically successful (Sümer & Güngör, 1999). On the other hand, in permissive/indulgent parenting style there is low control and acceptance/involvement and permissive/indulgent parenting style is always seen in urbanized and industrialized societies (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). The individuals that have permissive/indulgent families are expected to have much more entrepreneurial intention and characteristics than the individuals in authoritarian families. Therefore, in this study parents' parenting styles are expected to be different between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs group.

4. Data Set and Methodology

The data is collected from women entrepreneurs and women who work in the public sector. The contact information of women entrepreneurs was provided from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Turkey. Some questionnaires were collected by e-mails and some of them were carried out by face-to-face interviews. To make a valid and reliable comparison, the number of the participants in the two groups (entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs) was tried to keep equal or close to equal. 104 data from women entrepreneurs and 108 data from women who are working in the public sector were collected.

“The Big Five Inventory” and the “Perceived Parenting Styles” surveys formed by Sümer (1999) for Turkey was used in this study (Sümer & Güngör, 1999). All scales used a five-point scoring format ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The parenting style questionnaire had two dimensions: acceptance/involvement and control. The parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive/indulgent and permissive/ neglecting were constructed by combining perceived parental acceptance/involvement and control dimensions of parenting. The questions were asked separately for the mother and the father but were the same. Demographic questions like age, place of birth, education level of respondents’ parents and their job were also asked. The main research focus of the study is to determine the difference of personality characteristics and parents’ parenting styles between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Therefore the hypotheses in the study can be formed as,

H₁= There is a significant difference between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs regarding their big five personality characteristics.

H₂= There is a significant difference between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs regarding their mothers’ parenting styles

H₃= There is a significant difference between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs regarding their fathers’ parenting styles.

5. Empirical Results

The data cleaning and missing data analysis were performed. The factor analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted. The results of factor analysis also showed that all measures loaded on the expected factors with loadings above 0.50. All the measures have a cronbach alpha above 0.70 thus indicating a good evaluation of reliability of these measures. In examining the unidimensionality and convergent validity of the constructions, confirmatory factor analyses were performed on a measurement model, including personality characteristics and parenting style. Confirmatory factor analysis helps us to see whether the research model and the theoretical relationships between variables confirm the data set (Şimşek, 2007). It shows whether observable variables form latent variables or not and it also shows relationships between latent variables. In addition, the scales that were developed and used previously were checked by confirmatory factor analysis regarding to their factors in this data set (Meydan & Şeşen, 2011). The fit indices suggested a good fit for the model with GFI=0.87, AGFI=0.84, NFI=0.87, CFI=0.95, and RMSEA=0.06. After the confirmatory factor analysis, descriptive analyses were performed; Table 1 indicates the descriptive data about the perceived mother-fathers’ parenting styles of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs.

Table.1. Percentages of Entrepreneurs’ Mothers’ & Fathers’ Parenting Styles

Parenting Styles	Entrepreneurs’ Mothers-Fathers	Non-Entrepreneurs’ Mothers-Fathers
Authoritative	% 14.0 - % 17.9	%19.4 - %16.7
Permissive/ Indulgent	% 40.8 - % 52.7	%40.7 - %17.8
Authoritarian	% 29.8 - % 16.0	%20.4 - %49.6
Permissive/Neglecting	% 15.4 - % 13.5	%19.4 - %15.9

The results reported in Table 2 indicate that extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience as a personality factors and fathers' parenting styles are significantly different between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs ($p < 0.05$).

Table.2. Test results of Entrepreneurs' & Non-entrepreneurs' Parents Parenting Styles

Groups	F	p
Extraversion	3.96	.032*
Agreeableness	3.97	.037*
Conscientiousness	.361	.207
Neuroticism	.997	.245
Openness to Experience	5.55	.021*
Mothers' Parenting Style	.363	.617
Fathers' Parenting Style	7.94	.005*

• $p < .05$

Both women entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs perceived their mothers as permissive/indulgent. On the other hand, entrepreneurs perceived their fathers parenting style as permissive/indulgent but according to non-entrepreneurs their fathers' were authoritarian, which is a significant difference. In addition, while entrepreneurs show high score on extraversion and openness to experience, non-entrepreneurs have high score on agreeableness.

6. Conclusion

There are various approaches in literature to better understand entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not only an economic but also a social and cultural value. Kuratko and Hodgetts (2001) collect these approaches in two main topics: macro and micro approaches. In macro approaches they mention the environmental factors such as family, friends and other relatives who affect entrepreneurial intentions. On the other hand; personality as a variable in this study is evaluated as a micro feature of entrepreneurship. The studies related with entrepreneurs' personality showed that they are risk-taker, innovative, take responsibility and have good communication skills (Rauch & Frese, 2007; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Hisrich, 2002). In this respect our results show consistency with the literature.

Family is the key point in the cultural transition from one generation to the other. Although today it is changing, a number of studies showed that Turkey has had patriarchal culture (Sümer & Güngör, 1999; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010; Ecevit, 2007). Researchers generally studied parenting styles on cross-cultural comparisons, but there was no research about entrepreneurs' parents. An important part of the research contains comparisons between parents in extremely different cultures like the United States and Japan or China. The importance of role models is a well-known fact in entrepreneurship research: children of self-employed parents are over-represented among firm owners and those trying to start a business. Entrepreneurial socialization by family members and role modeling can trigger children's perception that entrepreneurship is a feasible and desirable career (Krueger et. al. 2001). The present study showed that fathers as economic role models have an important role in their children's perception. Also, lots of the participants said that they took the biggest support from their father when they started their career as an entrepreneur. The parents who show high acceptance and low control to their children help them to gain creative, self-qualified and autonomous characteristics. In addition, the educational level of women entrepreneurs' mothers and fathers is higher than non-entrepreneurs women.

Since the roles of family members are generally categorized according to their gender, this study emphasized the important role of fathers as a family member working outside. Although today this is changing rapidly, our society still has some fixed patterns regarding to gender. With the changing roles of parents, this study can be repeated and can show the importance of parents in different aspects. Furthermore, future research can be done in different cultures to investigate effects of other cultures on families' structure.

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